

## **Kentucky Applicant Registry and Employment Screening (KARES) Program Update**

In the November edition of the long-term care newsletter, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) provided you with information regarding the National Background Check Program (NBCP) grant, received last year from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The NBCP grant initiative, which is called the “Kentucky Applicant Registry and Employment Screening” or KARES program, will allow long-term care employers to send prospective employees to fingerprint collection sites located throughout the state for submission to a comprehensive state and national criminal background check.

The OIG is currently leading the effort to develop an easy-to-use, web-based portal that long-term care employers will access to initiate the fingerprint-supported background checks on behalf of new employees. Once operational, long-term care employers will be able to log-on to the KARES portal, enter personal identifying information on prospective employees, and await the results of a search of available abuse registries and licensure databases. If the prospective employee is cleared under the registry check process, the portal will allow employers to print an applicant-specific form which the applicant will take to a designated site and submit to the fingerprint check. KARES participating employers will soon be relieved of the burden of interpreting criminal record information for themselves as the OIG will be responsible for notifying employers regarding whether a prospective employee has been cleared to hire based on the results of the state and national criminal records check.

As the OIG rolls out the KARES program later this year, all long-term care facilities are encouraged to participate and take advantage of the program’s benefits, assuring that all new facility staff undergo the fingerprint-supported state and national background check, an enhancement over the in-state, name-based checks currently required by state law. Throughout the duration of the grant (or until grant monies are otherwise exhausted), long-term care employers participating in KARES will not be expected to pay in excess of the \$20 fee currently charged by the Kentucky State Police for in-state, name-based checks.

For more information regarding the KARES program, please contact Joe Casar, the OIG’s new KARES project director via email at [Joe.Casar@ky.gov](mailto:Joe.Casar@ky.gov), or Stephanie Brammer-Barnes at [Stephanie.Brammer@ky.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Brammer@ky.gov).